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EX PARTE

VIA ECFS AND EMAIL

February 26, 2016

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Re: *Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization*, WC Docket No. 11-42; *Telecommunications Carriers Eligible for Universal Service Support*, WC Docket No. 09-197; *Connect America Fund*, WC Docket No. 10-90.

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On Thursday, February 25, 2016, Javier Rúa Jovet, Esq., Chairman of the Telecommunications Regulatory Board of Puerto Rico, Ileana Fas, advisor to Chairman Rúa, and the undersigned met with Chairman Tom Wheeler, Gigi Sohn, Counselor to the Chairman, Stephanie Weiner, Senior Legal Advisor to the Chairman, and Trent Harkrader, Associate Bureau Chief of the Wireline Competition Bureau, to discuss the Commission's Lifeline modernization initiative. The attached presentation materials were distributed and discussed at the meeting.

At the meeting, we stressed that **the Commission's effort to modernize Lifeline will not succeed if it does not succeed in Puerto Rico**. Broadband adoption in Puerto Rico is far lower than any state. U.S. Census data show that there are only five municipalities in the entire nation with home broadband adoption less than 50% —and three of those five are in Puerto Rico. Over 400,000 Puerto Rico households are currently enrolled in the current Lifeline voice program —more than 41 states, the District of Columbia, and all other territories. The Commission should not unwittingly create any “qualification gaps” by limiting access to the Lifeline program to enrollees of certain federal assistance programs (like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the National School Lunch Program) that are not available to Puerto Rico residents. Limiting enrollment in this manner would have a devastating impact in Puerto Rico and would represent a lost opportunity to connect Puerto Rico residents to broadband. As the attached presentation shows, in Puerto Rico, more than two out of three households (69%) that have not adopted broadband make less than \$20,000 per year.

Pursuant to Section 1.1206 of the Commission's rules, a copy of this notice is being filed electronically in the above-captioned dockets. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

S/Thomas M. Koutsky

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cc:
Chairman Tom Wheeler
Gigi Sohn, Counselor to the Chairman
Stephanie Weiner, Senior Legal Advisor
Trent Harkrader, WCB